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## Women's Studies as a Pedagogical Model for Higher Learning

Theresa Strouth Gaul

Department of English and Women's Studies

Women's Studies as a discipline has passed its 40th anniversary; at TCU, Women's Studies will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2014. An interdisciplinary field that puts gender at the center of analysis, Women's Studies courses are offered at more than 700 colleges and universities, and it ranks among the fastest growing undergraduate majors (Berger 39). TCU's program offers an undergraduate minor and emphasis as well as a graduate certificate and replicates the national growth demographic: in 2012-13, undergraduates declaring the program increased by 100% and graduate students by 140%. Around 450 students enroll in WOST-approved courses each semester, and more than 60 faculty members claim WOST-affiliated faculty status.

Despite the flourishing of this discipline at the national and local levels, some still may question the place or validity of Women's Studies as part of a student's education. Even putting aside the many personal, ethical, political, and intellectual reasons for why students might choose to enroll in Women's Studies, there is an additional compelling—but under-recognized—reason to argue for its importance to college curricula. Women's Studies stands as a pedagogical leader and model for liberal education.

I bolster this claim through reference to an ambitious project launched by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) in 2005 called Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP), designed to describe and

prescribe practices that fulfill the promise of a twenty-first century liberal arts education. To this end, LEAP defined a series of Essential Learning Outcomes, Principles of Excellence, and High-Impact Practices, all of which are set out [on its website](#). For those of us who witness the metaphorical handwringing of the media regarding the "humanities crisis" and perhaps even do some literal handwringing ourselves on occasion, LEAP's conclusions are affirming, inspiring, and offer one possible blueprint for producing that old-fashioned goal of liberal education, "engaged and informed citizens" (LEAP website).

What struck me upon looking over the LEAP website was how the pedagogy associated with Women's Studies programs, known as feminist pedagogy, has been promoting and practicing the High-Impact Practices described on the LEAP site for decades. Feminist pedagogy was described in a now-classic article as promoting a

vision of the classroom as a liberatory environment in which we, teacher-student, and student-teacher, act as subjects, not objects. Feminist pedagogy is engaged teaching/learning—engaged with self in a continuing reflective process; engaged actively with the material being studied; engaged with others in a struggle to get beyond our sexism and racism and classism and homophobia and other destructive hatreds and to work together to enhance our knowledge; engaged with the community, with traditional organizations, and with movements for social change. (Shrewsbury 6)

Feminist pedagogy and LEAP's vision for liberal education converge in a number of concepts. Collaborative learning, long a hallmark of feminist pedagogy and emphasized in the language above with the phrases "engage with others" and "work together," undergirds LEAP's notions of Common Intellectual Experiences, Learning Communities, and Collaborative Assignments and Projects. Feminist pedagogy's commitment to seeing students actively engage

–with each other, the subject matter, and the community outside of the classroom—shows up in LEAP's prioritizing of writing, research, service learning, and internships. Diversity/Global Learning, another of LEAP's High-Impact Practices, is at the heart of feminist pedagogy, which seeks to understand the constructions and effects of difference in humans' lives and in society, and Women's Studies as a discipline, which has become increasingly interested in the effects of transnationalism on gender and the emergence of global feminisms.

Women's Studies offers above all an intellectual space for students to examine their identities and place in the

## KOEHLER EVENTS C E N T E R

### Teaching Naked: How Moving Technology out of your College Classroom will Improve Student Learning

In this hands-on keynote presentation, Dr. Jose Bowen, author of [Teaching Naked](#) and popular TED Talks, will share thoughts and strategies for improving student learning by moving technology outside of the classroom.

**Thursday, September 19, 2013  
12pm-1:30pm, Lunch Provided  
Kelly Center, Cox B**

Go to our [Koehler Events website](#) for more information and to register.



world, while learning to inhabit diverse perspectives and put theory into practice in the service of activism and social change. It also offers—perhaps surprisingly to those not familiar with the field—a longstanding tradition of critical inquiry, collaborative and engaged learning, and pedagogical innovation that can be a model to the larger institutions of higher learning within which Women's Studies programs exist. In this way, Women's Studies truly moves from margins to center.

#### Works Cited

Berger, Michele Tracy. "So You Want to Change the World?" *Ms. Magazine* (fall 2012): 38-42.

"Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP)." *American Association of Colleges and Universities*, 2013. Web. 1 July 2013. <http://www.aacu.org/leap/index.cfm>

Shrewsbury, Carolyn M. "What is Feminist Pedagogy?" *Women's Studies Quarterly* 15.3/4 (1987): 6-14.



### Wearable Technology and Somatic Gesture

Nick Bontrager  
School of Art



As a new media artist developing courses in the TCU School of Art, I am often asked, "what is new media?" While it can be many things, I strive to introduce my students and fellow faculty to new and emerging technologies that can be applied to a traditional studio arts practice.

My New Media Video Art course serves to introduce students to the basics of working with several forms of time-based media. While students quickly ask if they will

need to buy an expensive video camera, I remind them that the camera on their cellphone is one hundred times better than the camera that I first used to create videos. Due to its constant presence and ease of deployment, I encourage my students to use these tools they carry in their pockets every day. They are required to create a one-second video each day of the semester as a form of mental exercise, which led to the student curated TCU One Second Film Festival just this past semester. Over 130 TCU student films from the One Second Film Festival were screened in Houston, with the screening lasting just over two minutes.

For my Beginning New Media course, we focus on the creation of interactive electronics for artists. To empower students early in the course, we walk around our building or the campus looking at automated systems that we engage with every day. Looking at something like a handicap-accessible door, immediately the students realize that buttons, motion sensors, and light sensors are all around us. Even more interesting, they begin to realize that these socially acceptable forms are designed (and we are unknowingly trained) for a specific somatic gesture that they can mimic or adopt in their project. A common light switch forces my hand into a particular form by muscle memory; we typically turn the lights on or off with a pointed finger rather than a closed fist. A red switch or button on an object indicates a level of risk, either to the user or the environment. A fire alarm exemplifies this perfectly, often being contained by a plastic housing or glass covering. This additional layer of security forces the user to really consider if they are witnessing a “real” emergency. I encourage you to watch the main crosswalk on University Drive by our campus library with your students. A beeping alert designed for the visually impaired lets bystanders know it is safe to cross the street. However, the students permanently engaged with their cellphones/ Twitter/Facebook have adopted this audio indicator unknowingly and often walk blindly into traffic as soon as the beep begins. While completely fascinating as a social

## Student Engagement Strategies: Small Groups/Teams

Friday, November 8, 2013 in Winton-Scott 108  
from 9am-10am OR 2pm-3pm

The Small Groups / Teams Student Engagement Strategies workshop will discuss the benefits of incorporating small group work or student teams into your curriculum. In addition to providing information on team-based and problem-based learning, we'll examine sample assignments, rubrics, and evaluation methods for these participation models.

Register on our [workshop page](#).

study, these interactions allow students to borrow elements from these automated systems for their projects. My students know that if they place a large red button in the center of a gallery, a visitor may be hesitant to push it. This hesitation on the part of the visitor could build a desired sense of suspense in a gallery setting, or a student may wish to utilize a more inviting method of interaction.

As I am building entirely new courses in the TCU School of Art, I'm introducing students to completely foreign tools and techniques that can be overwhelming or complicated at times. I do a demonstration for my class each time something new is introduced, and make sure that each student feels comfortable with the new material and understands any safety precautions that must be taken. Recently, I've begun wearing a head-mounted video camera for these demonstrations so that students may see a first-person point-of-view tutorial they can access to anytime.

With the advent of products like Google Glass and other wearable technologies, I see this technique becoming a critical component to the “classroom of tomorrow.” While my current technique only allows students to view the video on a streaming video site, I look forward to utilizing the “Hangout” feature on Google Glass, which would allow for a live video connection to students in and out of the classroom. The advantages for distance learning are immediately obvious, though my real interest lies in the collaboration with other university programs and research nodes around the world. To be able to view a live robotics demonstration in London in the morning and get a personal tour of the MIT Media Lab in the afternoon sounds like something straight out of a science-fiction film but is rapidly approaching the realm of possibility.



## Enhancing Learning for Leadership and Life

Carol Clyde  
TCU Leadership Center

Students enter their university experience seeking the academic credentials that will bring into focus an idealized direction for their professional lives. They also seek the variety of experiences that have come to symbolize higher education in the United States and the opportunity to learn and grow as individuals. At TCU, we work to ensure that they depart our campus as educated citizens and leaders. As mentors, teachers, supporters and those who will enhance accountability, we must impart and develop those skills that will assist students' success upon graduation. Since our founding in 1993, the TCU Leadership Center works to ensure that all students have the opportunity to develop skills to assist

them in becoming campus and community leaders. We share with students that leadership skills are life skills. Whether managing others in a workplace, leading a community-building effort or in a meaningful relationship – there are many skills that will enhance their ability to succeed. These include conflict management, effective communication, problem solving, and goal setting/attainment.

We know from our students' participation in the annual CIRP Survey that they believe they are already competent leaders, and more than half believe leadership in a community context is an important trait. The TCU Leadership Center provides seminars, workshops, retreats, programs and coaching to support individual development. We have learned from student participation and self-reporting that they are also seeking opportunities to enhance their leadership learning and practice within the classroom. During the 2012-2013 academic year, a survey of nearly 1,000 undergraduate students reported that their highest leadership interest was in taking academic leadership classes that are related to either a major or minor. Students want to learn about leadership in an academic context. What follows provides some innovative ideas on how you might incorporate leadership learning in your own classroom.

### Group Projects

The most popular approach to leadership development within the classroom is through group projects. I often hear frustrations about the challenges of groups, and consistently remind students that most will experience group work in the “real world” – once college has been left behind the challenges and necessity for success in a group setting become much more significant. While reality TV shows such as The Apprentice or Hell's Kitchen portray group efforts that rarely embrace effective change, there are a number of tactics that might emphasize leadership learning in a classroom:

# KOEHLER C E N T E R EVENTS

## Designing Learning Spaces



Dr. Sanson will share lessons from Monash University's journey in designing learning spaces for the 21st century classroom and integrating spaces with the development of a new technology for classroom engagement.

**Monday, November 11, 2013,  
11:30am-1:30pm, Lunch Provided  
Smith 104B**

Go to our [Koehler Events website](#) for more information and to register.

- **Goal Clarification:** How well do groups clarify internally the goal that they are seeking? What measures are in place to determine their success? Do the goals set by the group meet those of the faculty member or client?
- **Problem Solving:** How do groups handle the challenges that are inherent in group work? What do the members do internally to hold each other accountable? How do they handle problems that arise before taking the issue to the professor?
- **Divergent Personalities:** There are few careers that occur in isolation, and even fewer in which

we can choose our coworkers. How do groups address personality clashes or an uncooperative or unpleasant member? How do students reflect on the application of this in other contexts?

- **Accountability:** How well do students hold each other accountable and challenge an uninvolved member? Do they share the workload evenly or does one person take on additional responsibilities due to a reluctance to delegate?

Leadership learning can be incorporated into any academic curriculum. While group projects are the most common approach, there are additional great opportunities to enhance the learning of your students. Potential areas to consider include:

- **Reflection:** Decades of research on experiential learning have proven that doing is an important aspect of learning and learning is most effective with active reflection (i.e. group or class discussion, papers or journals).
- **Clarifying Expectations:** Discussing expectations of the class, project or assignment and involving all parties initially allows for easier follow-through and a baseline to discuss accountability.
- **Explicit Learning Outcomes:** As educators we create learning outcomes to determine and measure success, and students might utilize this approach as well.
- **Self-Analysis:** The first step to leadership is understanding one's self. Many projects provide opportunities for students to evaluate themselves from a leadership perspective and consider areas for further development.

- **Guest Speakers:** As speakers tend to permeate the academic landscape, opportunities abound for interaction using an additional lens of leadership – asking about personal growth, leadership style, group experiences and goal attainment.

While any class does have a specific focus, there are opportunities in any discipline to work toward TCU's mission of developing leaders.



## Pedagogy and Inquiry: TCU's TA/GA Pedagogy Certification Course

Larisa Asaeli  
Department of English

When I came to TCU to start my doctorate in English, I already had almost 10 years teaching experience at private universities and a state college. In spite of all that experience, I quickly learned my teaching could improve (thanks to student evaluations and peer-teaching evaluations); my teaching persona and student feedback were areas that needed special attention. So when I heard about the Koehler Center's online TA/GA pedagogy certification course, I jumped at the chance.

Reflecting back on my experience with the course, there are three important insights that I gained from the TA/GA online course; first, constructing a course is more than designing a great reading list; second, effective teaching is more than entertaining students; and third, it's okay to be a "nice" teacher. Along with these insights, I came away from the course with three important documents or

"products" that have significantly enhanced my teaching: strong course outcomes, a revised teaching philosophy, and documentation of strong teaching.

### Constructing a Course

Based on my past experiences, I knew the nuts-and-bolts of constructing a course and a syllabus. Now I realize that the most important first step is the course outcomes. From the reading and discussion we did in the TA/GA class, I finally realized it was best to begin with the end in mind. Some questions that helped me reframe my courses were: What skills did I want the students to acquire by the end of the semester? What products would they create to demonstrate those skills? What would be the outcomes for each assignment? And how would my course outcomes coincide with the university's outcomes? With these questions guiding me, I was able to create clear, concise, and reachable outcomes for a future course. A bonus is that with clearly defined outcomes, it has become easier for me to evaluate student work. For instance, recently I was able to explain to a student that he received the grade he did because his product did not match the outcomes for the assignment or the course. It wasn't that I was being arbitrary, as he thought, but was following the rubric that was built on the assignment and course outcomes.

### Effective Teaching

One key I discovered was that effective teaching was not about entertaining students. Articulating a clear teaching philosophy that describes my personal teaching style helped me focus on my strengths, such as one-on-one conferencing, rather than berate myself about my "performance" in the classroom. The revisions to my teaching philosophy helped me clearly articulate how I see myself as a teacher and contemplate the changes I need to make in future. (You can read my [teaching philosophy on my website](#))

## Teaching Persona

Lastly, my most important take away from the TA/GA course was that it's good to be a "nice" teacher. In the past I believed that being firm, "mean," critical, and keeping my distance from students was the best method for teaching. Fortunately, I have turned away from that hard-nosed persona and embraced my "nice" side. This doesn't mean I have given up control of the classroom or the course to students; rather, it means that I put student learning and achievement ahead of "covering the material." For example, if students don't understand a reading assignment, we will read it together in class, often using multimedia. By doing this work in class, together, we have a more meaningful class discussion of rhetorical moves and literary devices. This skill of being "nice" was demonstrated to me clearly when I observed Dr. Australia Tarver's class as one of my assignments for the TA/GA course. Though I know her to be a "nice" colleague, I had never taken a class from her and therefore did not know her teaching style. In November 2012,

I chose to observe her Women in Literature and Culture class because it is one that I would like to teach one day (this was a criteria for the assignment). From the moment Dr. Tarver walked into the class, she exuded warmth, excitement, and encouragement. I could tell from her body language that she wanted to be there. She answered students' questions and gently led the class discussion, encouraging and challenging the students along the way. Afterwards, I knew what a student-centered classroom looks like: all feel included, respected, and valued.

In Spring 2013 I consciously sought to enact a similar "nice" persona when I taught two sections of English 20833. Surprisingly (or not) I began to notice that students were interested in talking more often in class; conferences were more meaningful; and students made significant revisions to their essays in response to my gentle but pointed suggestions. I took it for a good sign on our final exam day that my students in English 20833 were sad the course was over. But even better, my scores on my student evaluations increased from a 3.86 in Fall 2012 to 4.37 in Spring 2013; and 83% of my students in one class, and 75% in another, "very strongly agreed" that I "created and maintained an atmosphere of civility and respect." While it may seem like I am bragging, I know that this jump from 60% in Fall 2012 shows that the work I did via the online TA/GA course paid off –not only in these measurable outcomes, but also because better learning happened in the class.

In conclusion, there were many measurable benefits from this online course. I was able to create some strong documents and have a fabulous semester teaching. But most importantly, my pedagogy will continue to be a source of inquiry for me.

## Peer Teaching Evaluation Strategies

Monday, September 9, 9am-10:30am  
OR Thursday September 12, 9am-10:30am  
in Winton-Scott 108

In this hands-on workshop, we'll discuss strategies and best practices for peer teaching evaluations. Koehler Center staff will share observation and evaluation rubrics, discuss innovative evaluation methods, and share suggestions for post-evaluation reflection.

Register on our [workshop page](#).





## Face-to-Face Teaching: Who Came to Class & Where Should the Class Go Today?

Kate Marshall

Koehler Center for Teaching Excellence



As an instructor, it is very challenging to help your students meet course objectives if they do not come to class. Of course, whether or not students make it into the classroom is their choice. What you do with the data about who is present and absent is your choice. I recall a statistics professor in college displaying a graph of the relationship between attendance and final exam scores for the previous semester. He pointed out that there were many possible inferences one could draw from the data, but there was no support for the interpretation that multiple absences would make your demonstrable statistical knowledge grow stronger. The room fell silent. And course attendance improved significantly thereafter.

This was such an effective teaching moment because the professor was able to use real attendance data from a past class. Some might suggest that taking attendance in college-level courses seems infantilizing or paternalistic. However, as an instructor, you are not taking attendance for your students; you are taking it for yourself. Taking attendance provides you with the opportunity to deliver a teachable moment next semester about the importance of coming to class, ensures that your records reflect the day's events in case you need to verify things at a later date, and sets you up to reach out to struggling students or appropriate campus offices on their behalf. Without this data, all you have are your impressions and the potential for conflicting memories.

Taking attendance does not have to take time away from course content. For example, an in-class quiz, student response clickers, asking students to hand in a quick reflection on the day's lecture or reading before leaving the classroom, or taking attendance while you circulate around the room as the students work on projects or labs are all ways that attendance data can be gathered incidentally.

There are also several low-cost apps that can help you keep track of classroom attendance. In addition, you also have the option to send an individual student's records to him/her, thereby increasing the transparency of the process and providing the data to the students early enough to facilitate improvements in attendance. Available in the iTunes store for \$4.99, [Attendance2](#) allows you to create multiple classes (using contacts or a .csv upload), track customized fields of information (beyond present/absent), and use the app to randomly select students who are present in order to insure equitable classroom participation. Likewise, the [Pikme](#) app, free in the iTunes store, offers most of these same features, but has a somewhat more complicated procedure for importing class lists. For Android users, the suite of free apps created by the [Android for Academics](#) group includes an [attendance app](#) that syncs with Google Docs.

Yet, focusing on who is in the classroom in no way suggests that the classroom itself is the sole location for learning about or applying course content. In addition to internships, practicums, service learning opportunities, and other off-site experiences, technology can bring the world into your classroom.

In particular, the opportunities for virtual field trips have expanded rapidly in the past few years. The [Google Art Project](#) is a collection of over 30,000 artworks from over 150 art institutions around the world. Students can search for artworks by museum, artist, or keyword; they can then add artworks to their own virtual gallery and share the gallery

online. This is an excellent way to look at representations of a theme across time or have your students assess the impact of world events through the arts. On a related note, the Metropolitan Museum of Art has recently launched a new [digital publications website](#) that offers enhanced searching and full access to the Met's catalogs, journals, and bulletins. Especially noteworthy about this endeavor is that it also includes information from out-of-print catalogs related to special exhibitions.

If an art-based virtual field trip doesn't fit your course content, there are other options that take advantage of the internet's ability to allow users to virtually hop across time and space, picking the best materials for their learning purposes. The [Newseum](#), focusing on the history and current state of news media, has a large collection of online exhibits ranging from photography and editorial cartoons to historical retrospectives and international topics. The Newseum also hosts a daily gallery of newspaper front pages from across the country and around the world. There's no need for conjecture about how certain stories are presented in foreign media or how images are used in different settings; your students can conduct a compressed version of their own global field research. Likewise, the website [YouTube Time Machine](#) has taken content from YouTube and assembled it in an easy interface that showcases audio/video content by year (1860 – 2012). Items from the selected year play randomly, but it is possible to focus your viewing within seven broad categories (commercials, current events, television, music, sports, video games, and movies).

Last, you might arrange a [Skype](#) video chat between your students and the author of a key reading, a practitioner in the field, or some other expert. Students can use their own research and course content to generate questions in advance. This sort of preparation ensures that the time spent on Skype is not merely a generic video lecture but a meaningful exchange of ideas between your students and the Skype guest.

As a complement to the resources listed above, you may also wish to consult the [Koehler Center's discipline-specific list of multimedia teaching tools](#). This extensive list contains a wide variety of potential digital experiences for your students. Each entry is accompanied by a short description and information about the cost or advertising associated with the tool.

The classroom is certainly where learning takes place, and there is great value in recording which students are coming to class. But the classroom, the instructor's office, and class texts need not be the only sites for course knowledge. In our increasingly digital world, new and exciting virtual destinations and connections abound. Best, it is possible to both take attendance and have your students acquire broader perspectives on course content without spending exorbitant amounts of money on fancy software or expensive international travel.

## Student Engagement Strategies: Large Classrooms

Wednesday, September 25, 2013  
from 9am-10am OR 2pm-3pm  
in Winton-Scott 108

In this Student Engagement Strategies workshop, we'll discuss techniques for engaging students in large groups. If you teach in a large lecture hall or high-enrollment setting, this workshop is for you.

Register on our [workshop page](#).



## Wellness or Illness: The Choice is Yours

David E. Upton  
TCU Human Resources

At the beginning of the 20th century the life expectancy for a child born in the United States was 47 years. The most common health problems were infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, diphtheria, influenza, kidney disease, polio, and other diseases of infancy. Medical advancements have largely eliminated these diseases. The current life expectancy in the United States is 78.5 years. Concomitant with these medical advancements have come technological advancements that have produced an environment that has almost eliminated the need for physical exertion. Additionally, we have access to readily available, processed, high fat, high caloric foods, the portion sizes of which have increased significantly over the last fifty years.

This series of events has given rise to significant increases in chronic diseases such as hypertension, coronary heart disease, atherosclerosis, diabetes (collectively referred to as Metabolic Diseases), and many forms of cancer. Cardiovascular disease and cancer cause approximately 62% of all deaths in the United States. A healthy lifestyle program could prevent almost 80% of these deaths. In fact, epidemiologists have estimated that 83% of the deaths occurring before the age of 65 are preventable. As a society we accept, as a natural part of the aging process, the increase in our body weight, the additional aches and pains, the more frequent visits to the doctor for a variety of symptoms, the slowing down and loss of productivity, and the inability to participate in various activities of daily living. Is this increase in chronic diseases a natural consequence of living longer? Scientists say no; it is the natural consequence of

poor lifestyle choices, not a requirement of the aging process. Unfortunately, we have a healthcare system designed to take action only after the individual becomes ill. Consequently 95 cents of every dollar spent on “healthcare” in this country goes toward illness treatment, with only 5 cents of each dollar spent on prevention. This model has produced an annual healthcare expenditure of more than \$2.5 trillion – over ten times the \$256 billion spent in 1980 – and expenditure is increasing each year. Albert Einstein described this phenomenon many years ago when he defined insanity: “Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.”

In short, our society has not, and will not, solve the problem by attempting to manage health by adding more doctors, nurses, hospitals, procedures, and devices.

A large percentage of the “healthcare” expenditures and our ill-health are associated with poor lifestyle choices, lifestyle choices that we make every day, lifestyle choices that have outcomes. Are you satisfied with your outcomes? Are you enjoying your life to the fullest? If not, in keeping with Einstein’s definition of insanity; it is time to make a different choice. The choice is to make changes in your lifestyle practices, such that you move from a path toward “illness” to one of “wellness.”

The term “wellness” has numerous definitions. The Encarta Dictionary defines wellness as “mental and physical soundness” while Merriam-Webster states that wellness is “the quality or state of being in good health especially as an actively sought goal.” The concept of wellness is not new. In fact Hippocrates, in 370 B.C., alludes to wellness in the following statement:

All parts of the body which have a function, if used in moderation and exercised in labors to which each is accustomed, become healthy and well developed

and age slowly. But if unused and left idle, they become liable to disease, defective in growth and age quickly.

The roots of Western modern day wellness lie in the Eastern teachings of body, mind, and spirit that suggest that these three elements must coexist in harmony and balance. Halbert Dunn, M.D., in 1961, published one of the earliest Western definitions of wellness. Dr. Dunn defines wellness as “an integrated method of functioning which is oriented toward maximizing the potential of which the individual is capable of functioning within the environment.”

Accordingly, wellness is not merely the absence of disease or infirmity; it is a process to which one commits in order to consistently improve one’s quality of existence. Wellness thereby is a way of life. It is a design for living life to one’s fullest and, perhaps most importantly, it is a choice. We make choices every day, some of which are in accordance with the maximizing of our potential while others may inhibit or interfere with that goal.

One can perhaps better describe than define wellness.

- Wellness is a process of achieving one’s full potential; this process requires participant involvement, takes a conscious effort, and involves continual evolution.

- Wellness is a choice that we each have the opportunity to make.

- Wellness is positive, affirming, and empowering.

- Wellness is independent of religious affiliation or beliefs.

- Wellness is multidimensional, and each of the six dimensions is interrelated and overlapping. These dimensions follow:

- Social
- Intellectual
- Physical
- Spiritual
- Occupational
- Emotional



## Join us this fall for Teaching and Learning Conversations with:

- Michael Strausz on September 16
- Amber Esping on October 16
- Richard Leo Enos on November 5

Read about the fall topics and Register on our [workshop page](#).

Koehler Center Teaching and Learning conversations are delivered by TCU faculty to help enrich the TCU teaching community. If you are interested in leading a Teaching and Learning Conversation, please review our [TLC webpage](#) for information on submitting a proposal.

Although this process may sound time-consuming, it is not—especially if we compare the time invested in wellness to the time spent being ill. Doctors appointments, diagnostic tests, recovery and rehabilitation from various injuries or infirmities, inability to enjoy and participate in activities of daily living, lost productivity, not to mention the associated financial costs all require time. Additionally, as we age, we spend more of our time dealing with these lifestyle-related illnesses.

Wellness does require an initial investment of time, or more accurately stated it requires a reallocation of our existing time. We can change anything. The first step in the change process is making the decision that we need to change, and then we must take action on that decision by implementing a results-oriented program that replaces our illness-promoting behaviors with wellness-facilitating behaviors. It is a lifestyle change with the outcome being enhanced health and well-being. Learn how TCU is supporting this change on the [Wellness Gold Website](#).



## Letter to a First-Year Colleague

Ed Waggoner  
Brite Divinity School

Dear Colleague,

How can I describe for you this Texas heat? When not moistening ourselves in pools, we swaddle in layers of air-conditioning and drink vats of icy mixtures. Direct light between the summer hours of 10:00AM and 4:00PM is assiduously avoided by a majority of Texans. I emerge mostly in the evenings, like a vampire, after the all-seeing eye of the sun sinks under the horizon. Ah, but winter is scarcely

noticeable here; spring and fall, wondrous; and the library here at TCU—as also the world-over—fit for comfort in every season. Welcome, my tenure-seeking friend!

It has been merely a year since I arrived at Brite Divinity School at TCU as a first-year faculty member. I want to pen a few thoughts for you as I prepare for my second year. This is un-asked-for advice, I know; but I am confident that you will ignore or use it as seems best to you. Here are three mantras for start-up at TCU: cultivate professional relationships that further your scholarship as a social act; build habits of self-care; and enjoy Texas and Fort Worth. (It goes without saying that, above all, you should listen to wise deans and mentors. If they be not wise, listen respectfully, anyway. Adopt this as the mantra of your mantras.)

Know that scholarship is a social act. Make time for conversations with colleagues about teaching. Artful teachers create synergies with others. Seek interesting discussion-partners inside and outside your field. Start, of course, with those in your department, but do not stop there. TCU has a diverse and exciting mix of intellectuals. Start a writing group with faculty from other disciplines. Find colleagues who can guest spot in your classes. Join creative working groups with scholars and teachers at other institutions – nationally and internationally. Look for folk who are centered and passionate, and be that way with them.

Your classroom discussions, coffee-chats, and conversations at campus events can form part of the living tissue of your research. If you prioritize ‘So what?’ questions in your courses, you will benefit from the richly diverse experiences of your students; and they, from yours. Like all academics, you will spend alone-time everyday, to think and read and write and prepare for class. Avoid thinking of this work as creation ex nihilo. Rather, continue there with curiosities and questions that emerge in social networks with students, colleagues, and friends. Once you get the hang of it, the process becomes

circular in a tenure-helpful way: research and writing, in turn, guide your decisions about which courses to offer. For more on this, consult with deans and mentors.

Get to know the professionals at TCU who can help you with the details that make scholarship possible. Start with the TCU police department, parking division. Yep. Parking on campus is a dark art. Learn it fast, directly from those most in command of its elements. Meet the good people whose expertise in two- and three-letter departments, like HR (Human Resources), IT (Information Technology), and ILL (Inter-Library Loan) can change your life. Avail yourself of Koehler Center offerings: seminars on how to use LearningStudio, design courses, and build tenure portfolios. Koehler folk are ridiculously smart and friendly. Not meeting them during your first year is a rookie mistake.

Build habits of self-care. Respect yourself as an embodied creature. Good food, ample sleep, and refreshing exercise are not 'extra' but basic to the trifecta of research, teaching, and service. Improve your diet. Find out where the best and cheapest eats are. Secure a full-sized locker at the TCU recreation center and take three sessions with a personal trainer to establish exercise habits that fit your needs and interests. If you enjoy watching college football, call the Athletics Department the day you get your job offer at TCU to add your name to wait-list for faculty season tickets. Sadly, at new faculty orientation in August, you will meet countless newbies who did not get this sage advice. Avoid their pain. If not football, enjoy the concerts, theatre productions, art shows, or other events that come at little or no cost to you.

Friendships are the most important and influential habit you can make. Keep in touch on a regular basis with your best friends from previous contexts. Shed the flaky ones. Let love for and from family, friends, and neighbors encompass, nourish, and relativize your professional life. Teaching, scholarship, and service are branches rather than roots of

whole-personed love. If you will disbelieve this maxim, look first to the wreckage of those in our line of work who sacrifice too much personal happiness to attain and keep their position. Got beauty in your life? Nurture it. Do not have a creative and fun hobby? Get one. Crave friends? Make some.

Enjoy Texas and Fort Worth. You have heard some of the highlights in the pitch that drew you here. Learn a bit about the history of this school. In order to interact creatively with students in your courses, you will have to know something about this social and cultural context. Like any major city, Fort Worth has racial, economic, and political issues that are difficult. Find out what they are, and decide how you will invest in solutions. More importantly: ask a diverse range of Fort Worthians what they love most about their city. Then seek ways to experience it.

If you have never lived in Texas, then get out and see it. It is vast. It borders Mexico. It has a coast. It has mountains (though I myself have never seen them). It rains, once and a while. There are cows. Oil. Baptists. Lots of guns. The Dallas-Fort Worth area – the Metroplex – is home to millions of people. The stereotypes about them are true. Except when they are not. Which is often. Which means: you will get to make your own decisions and find your own joys and heartaches. Suffer no one to persuade you otherwise. Enough advice. Look me up when the dust of your fall semester settles. I will buy you an icy drink.

All Best Wishes,

Ed Waggoner